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Addendum

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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 10. Africa: New Agenda for Development

1. At its 25th meeting, on 21 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 10, Africa: New Agenda for Development, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 10)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. The priority assigned to the development of Africa by the General Assembly was reaffirmed and support was expressed for the programme. It was proposed that the Cairo Agenda for Action: Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development,[1] which states Africa's development priorities, should be cited in the programme budget document. It was suggested that recent mandates, such as General Assembly resolutions 53/90 of 7 December 1998 on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and 53/92 of 7 December 1998 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa should also be referred to in the narrative of the section.

4. The view was expressed that the programme should be more operationally oriented and should comprise tangible actions towards improving the situation in Africa. In this connection, it was observed that available resources should primarily benefit activities taking place in the field.

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5. It was, however, emphasized that the programme was not designed to implement programmes and operational activities for African development, but rather to be a catalyst and coordinate and promote activities undertaken by other programmes and entities directly responsible for such activities. It was recalled that the programme was to play an advocacy role to ensure that the issues related to African development remained on the agenda within the United Nations system and the international community.

6. It was felt that the resources for the programme should be increased. The view was expressed that better balance in terms of resources should be provided between the subprogrammes. The view was also expressed that the value added of the programme was minimal and, as a result, the proposed increase in the resources could not be supported.

7. Concern was expressed regarding the possible overlap and duplication between the activities of the three subprogrammes and between the subprogrammes and those of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-based secretariat of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa for the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The view was expressed that the resources and activities of the programme were too scattered, hence better focus for the programme and its activities was required. It was observed that the relevant units in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Public Information, responsible respectively for subprogrammes 1, 2 and 3, had made particular efforts not only to coordinate the activities proposed in the three subprogrammes, but also to coordinate the activities with the activities of other units concerned. As a result, it was felt that duplication or overlap of activities had been averted.

8. It was noted with concern that the decline in the availability of extrabudgetary resources under the section would affect adversely the implementation of the programme of activities. It was observed that the number of posts funded from extrabudgetary resources was expected to be reduced and that increased regular budget resources would be needed to ensure that the mandated activities under the programme would be implemented.

9. It was considered that the expected accomplishments should be more precisely described so as to allow measurement of the extent to which they had been achieved. The view was expressed that programme managers needed to implement more fully the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which require self-evaluation and identification of activities that are inefficient, ineffective or irrelevant. The view was also expressed that the formulation of expected accomplishments was not feasible for some activities dealing with economic and social affairs.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 10, Africa: New Agenda for Development, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 with the following modifications:

(a) At the end of the third sentence of paragraph 10.2 the words "in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/90 of 7 December 1998 and in the context of the Cairo Agenda for Action: Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development" should be added;

(b) At the end of paragraph 10.2 a new sentence should be added, reading:

"In its resolution 53/92 of 7 December 1998, the General Assembly welcomed the recommendations of the Secretary-General and requested him to submit a

progress report on the implementation of the recommendations to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session".

11. The Committee noted the coordination efforts among the various entities for the implementation of this subprogramme and encouraged the continuation of those efforts.

Notes

[1] See A/50/647, annex II, resolution AHG/Res. 236 (xxxi), annex.